

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 NASA-01 ERDA-05 OES-06 IO-13 SAJ-01 /092 W

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R 141445Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WWASHDC 3439

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBSSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MSOCOW

AMEMBSSY PARIS

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AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBSSY WARSAW

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GE, UR

SUBJECT: SOYUZ 22 ASTRONAUTS VISIT EAST BERLIN

REF: BERLIN 6872

### SUMMARY

THE HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED VISIT OF THE SOVIET SOYUZ 22 COSMONAUTS TO EAST BERLIN BEGINNING OCTOBER 12 HAS AFFORDED THE GDR A CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF SOVIET -GDR COOPERATION TO USE IN HONORING THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET-GDR TREATY OF FREINDSHIP, COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSITANCE. HAVING PARTICIPATED IN SOYUZ 22 BY PROVIDING A COMPLEX MULTISPECTRAL CAMERA FOR USE DURING THE FLIGHT( REFTEL, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE GDR IS GOING OVERBOARD TO HERALD THE SPACE MISION AS A

SYMBOL OF INCREASED SOVIET-GDR TECHNICAL COOPERATION- AND BY IMPLICATION POLITICAL COOPERATION - AND AN IMPORTANT IMPETUS TO INCREASED GDR PARTICIPTION IN SOVIET SPACE PROGRAMS WHICH COULD FIND A GDR ASTRONAUT IN SPACE AS EARLY AS 1978. END SUMMARY.

1. THE REGIME TURNED THE COSMONAUTS' VISIT INTO A QUINTESSENTIAL SOVIET-GDR LOVE FEAST IN EAST BERLIN WITH THE USUAL CAST OF CHARACTERS ASSEMBLED FOR THE EVENT, INCLUDING HONECKER, MOST OF THE SED POLITBUO, SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV, COMMANDER OF THE SOVIET FORCES IN GERMANY GENERAL IVANOVSKIY, CHIEF OF POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SOVIET FORCES GENERAL MEDNIKOV, AND A CAST OF THOUSANDS OF FLAG-WAVING, CHANTING EAST BERLINERS CALLED OUT OF FACTORIES AND SCHOOLS TO LINE THE 30-KILOMETER ROUTE FROM SCHOENEFELD AIRPORT TO EAST BERLIN.

2. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, AS WELL AS OTHER EAST BERLIN PAPERS, ON OCTOBER 13 GAVE THE FIRST DAY OF THE ASTRONAUT'S VISIT A DEGREE OF PRESS COVERAGE INORDINATE EVEN BY GDR STANDARDS. NOT ONLY WAS THE ENTIRE FRONT PAGE OF ND DEVOTED TO THE VISIT, BUT THREE AND A HALF PAGES ON THE INSIDE AS WELL, COMPLETE WITH 17 PHOTOGRAPHS. ND DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE SPACE TO CHARACTERIZING THE REACTION OF AVERAGE GDR CITIZENS AS THE ASTRONAUTS RODE THROUGH EAST BERLIN IN THEIR OPEN VEHICLE. IT MADE AN ESPECIALLY VALIANT ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY THE SCENE AS ONE OF DEVOTION TO THE SOVIET UNION, ESPECIALLY AMONG GDR YOUTH. ND LINGERED ON THE DESCRIPTION OF ONE PLACARD, FOR EXAMPLE, DESCRIBED AS "LOVINGLY SELF DRAWN" HELD HIGH BY "YOUNG HANDS", AND BEARING THE PITHY INSCRIPTION: "SOYUZ 22-SYMBOL OF OUR FRIENDSHIP." AN ALERT ND CORRESPONDENT REPORTED HEARING A YOUNG EAST BERLIN GIRL SAY JUST AS THE ASTRONAUTS PASSED BY: "IN THIS SPACE EXPERIMENT ONE COULD SEE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO MASTER THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE. ONLY THOSE WHO SPEAK RUSSIAN ARE UP TO THIS NEW LEVEL OF COOPERATION." EVEN THE 5 AND 6 YEAR OLDS WERE JUBILANT, ACCORDING TO ND, AS WAS 69 YEAR OLD WOMAN WHO TOLD AN ND REPORTER HOW HAPPY SHE WAS THAT SHE HAD TICKETS TO THAT EVENING'S CONCERT PROGRAM AND WOULD THUS BE ABLE TO SEE THE ASTRONAUTS AGAIN.

3. AT A MULTI-MEDIA CONCERT PROGRAM, THE MOST ELABORATE ENTERTAINMENT EXTRAVAGANZA FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES HELD IN EAST BERLIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SINCE THE SED NINTH PARTY CONNGRESS IN MAY, GDR PERFORMERS APPEARED ON STAGE WHILE IN THE BACKGROUND FILMS WERE SHOWN OF THE SOYUZ 22 TAKEOFF, THE SIGNING OF THE 1975 TREATY, AND THE ASTRONAUTS' ARRIVAL IN BERLIN THAT MORNING. WE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT HONECKER IGNORED SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV AT THE CONCERT, THOUGH HE LATER SAT JUST A FEW SEATS DOWN FROM HIM IN THE FIRST ROW, AND DID NOT SHAKE HANDS WITH HIM AT THE BEGINNING, ALTHOUGH STOPH DID, AND SAT WITH HIM. GDR TELEVISION CAMERAS FOCUSED ALMOST

EXCLUSIVELY ON HONECKER AND THE ASTRONAUTS THROUGHOUT THE EVENING THE PROGRAM CULMINATED WITH A SERIES OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN SONGS AND SEVERAL NUMBERS PLAYED BY COMBINED SOVIET AND GDR MILITARY ORCHESTRAS. A NEW GDR SONG, WRITTEN ESPECIALLY FOR THE OCCASION AND SUNG FOR 3,500 ASSEMBLED GUESTS, LAUDED THE ASTRONAUTS AND MELODIOUSLY PROCLAIMED " WE ARE FOREVER ALLIED, IN THE COSMOS AS ON EARTH." ANOTHER POPULAR SONG DATING FROM THE SED NINTH PARTY CONGRESS, AND LIKEWISE PAYING HOMAGE TO ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE GDR AND THE USSR, WAS ALSO TRUCKED OUT ON THIS OCCASION, THE SONG'S TITLE, IRONICALLY ENOUGH--"THE HARVEST WAS GOOD."

4. PRESENTING THE SOVIET ASTORNAUTS WITH THE KARL MARX AWARE, THE GDR'S HIGHEST DECORATION, SED PARTY CHIEF HONECKER STRESSED THE " NEW STAGE" OF SOVIET-GDR REALTIONS, AND SAID THAT HIS AUGUST MEETING WITH BREZHNEV IN THE CRIMEA WAS MERELY THE LATEST DISCUSSIO ON DEEPENING TIES BETWEEN THE USSR AND GDR ON THE BASIS OF THE COTOBER 1975 TREATY. FOR HONECKER, THE FLIGHT OF SOYUZ 22 NOW PROVIDED PROOF THAT THE TREATY HAD BEEN IMPORTANT AND WORTH- WHILE IN THE FIRST YER OF ITS EXISTENCE. ASTRONAUT BYKOVSKY TOOK UP THE THEME OF INCREASED SOVIET-GDR COOPERATION UNDER THE TREATY IN ACCEPTING THE AWARD. AFTER RECALLING HONECKER'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET SPACE CENTER AT THE TIME OF THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS, BYKOVKSY QUOTED BREZHNEV'S REMARK AT THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY ON OCTOBER 1975 THAT THE SOVIET PEOPLE WOULD GUARD ITS " BROTHERLY FRIEDNSHIP" WITH THE GDR LIKE THE " APPLE OF ITS EYE" AND DEVELOP IT" UNREMITTINGLY."

5. IN ADDITION TO USING THE ASTRONAUTS VISIT TO SYMBOLIZE THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1975 SOVIET-GDR TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, THE REGIME SEIZED THE OCCASION TO HERALD INCREASED GDR PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE SOVIET SPACE PROGRAM. IN ITS DESCRIPTIN OF THE AIRPORT ARRIVAL SCEN, ND HAD HONECKER TURING TO A GROUP OF GDR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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YOUNGSTERS AND SAYING" YOU, TOO , CAN BE ASTRONAUTS ONE DAY"AND IN A SPEECH DELIVEREDAFTERHIS ARRIVAL, BYKOVSKY COMMENTED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE LONG BEFORE A GDR ASTRONAUT WAS IN SPACE.

6. COMMENT: AFTER HAVING DOWN-PLAYED THE 1975 TREATY ANNIVERSARY ON OCTOBER 7, WHICH AS ALSO THE GDR NATIONAL DAY,IN FAVOR OF EXHORTATIONS FOR THE GDR POPULACE TO APPROVE THE OFFICIAL LIST OF CANDIATES FOR THE VOLKSKAMMER ELECTONS ON OCTOBER 17, THE GDR NOW HAS CHOSE TO USE SOYUZ 22, A SPECIFIC COOPERATIVE SOVIET-GDR EVENT, AS AN OCCASION FOR LAUDING THE PROMISE OF THE TREATY. THE GDR'S RELATIVE AVOIDANCE OF THE SOVIET THEM ON ITS OCTOBER 7 NATIONAL DAY MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO MAKE UP FOR THEOBSEQUIOUS BEHAVIOR OF THE SED LEADERSHIP IN OCTOBER1975, WHEN THE ENTIRESED POLITBURO WAS IN MOSCOW FOR THE TREATY SIGNING ON THE GDR'S NATIONAL DAY. HONECKER'S UNUSUAL LACK OF

ATTENTION TO ABRASIMOV AT THE OCTOBER QE CONCERT CAN ALSO BE SEEN  
IN THIS LIGHT. THE GDR IS ATTEMPTING TO STRESS ITS OWN ROLE IN THE  
SOYUZ PROJECT AND TO LAUD ITS OWN TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS ON  
THIS OCCASION. THE PROJECTS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SPECIAL ROLE THE  
GDR SEES FOR ITSELF IN THE " NEW STAGE" OF ITS REATION WITH THE  
SOVIET UNION LAUNCHED IN THE OCTOBER 1975 TREATY.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, ASTRONAUTS, VISITS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 14 OCT 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ullricre  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976BERLIN06909  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760386-1266  
**From:** BERLIN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761054/aaaabuwf.tel  
**Line Count:** 176  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 BERLIN 6872  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ullricre  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 07 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <07 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by ullricre>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SOYUZ 22 ASTRONAUTS VISIT EAST BERLIN  
**TAGS:** PFOR, OTRA, GC, UR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006